

Gastrointestinal Tract (GI) Series



1. What is a GI series?

A GI series (barium enema) is a set of X-rays taken to examine the esophagus, stomach, small intestine, and colon. X-rays are taken after the patient has swallowed a barium suspension (contrast medium) or injected barium through the anus.

2. What is the purpose of test?

- Confirm diagnosis of colon cancer, gastric cancer, ulcer, bowel inflammatory disease, and etc.
- Detects polyps and structural changes in the GI tract.
- Dyspepsia.
- Body weight loss.

3. How does the patient prepare?

Lower GI series:

1. 3 days prior to the examination: low residue diet.
2. On the day prior to examination: fluid only and take Laxative at 8 a.m. and 6p.m. for cleansing enemas.
3. Please do not eat any food including water, before 4 hours.

Upper GI and small intestine series :

1. No smoking on the day
2. Generally, oral medications may be taken.
3. Please do not eat any food including water, before 4 hours.

4. What are the risks?

- There is low radiation exposure. Children are more sensitive to the risks of X ray.
- A more serious risk is a perforated GI tract, which is very rare.
- Aspiration for upper GI series.
- Pregnant women are contraindicated.



5. How is the aftercare?

The patient should be warned that his bowel motion will be white for a few days after the examination, and keep his bowels open with laxatives to avoid impaction, which can be painful.